

Jack
the Ripper

Peter Hodgson

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Jack the Ripper
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Through the Mists of Time

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Finally, I should like to acknowledge Treasure Press whose chapter 'East End Slaughters' – from *Infamous Murders* – is discussed in this book.

FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

The unsolved crimes committed by the man who became known as 'Jack the Ripper' undoubtedly constitute one of the world's greatest conundrums. Can there ever be a final answer to the question, 'Who was he?' Well, numerous authors and people with more than just a passing interest in the case would answer, 'Yes, the mystery is solved. We know who murdered those unfortunate women in London's East End in 1888.' But to know that a fact is really true, you need to have indisputable evidence that proves 'truth', and with the case of The East End Murderer, The Whitechapel Fiend, Jack the Ripper - or whatever you wish to call him - there is no hard evidence that enables us to say, without the slightest reservation, that a particular person was responsible.

My interest in the murders goes back to when I was a mere lad of fifteen. I remember browsing through several books in the oversize section of the Harris library in Preston and coming across one book that contained a section on the Whitechapel murders. Apart from the chilling name we now associate with those distant crimes, I knew little else. As the years passed by I went from one book to another hoping to find the answer to this fascinating riddle. It was not to be. There was no answer in 1888 and there isn't now.

What is perhaps significant today is that to know the identity of the murderer would probably be something of an anticlimax; it doesn't matter 'who' because the fiction is far more potent than the fact. Having said that, the fog-laden stories with their hollow cries of 'Another 'orrible murder!' - along with the many explanations and theories - have seduced me into becoming an ardent enthusiast of this ongoing saga. Even as I write this introduction, the newspapers are priming readers with details of forthcoming films about the Ripper.

I will always be intrigued by the unanswered questions, and I must point out that I have the greatest respect for the authors and researchers who have diligently searched for that small item of 'lost' material that has brought us closer to another possible solution.

You may be surprised to learn that there is far more information available about the murderer's victims than the man himself. The Ripper murdered at least four women. Their appalling injuries are well documented, and the sites of the crime locations are visited every year by thousands of people from all parts of the globe. Apart from these facts, what can be said about the killer himself? Very little, I'm afraid, but a detailed study of his crimes - the mutilations in particular - have led me to the core of his grotesque fantasies.

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This book highlights some of the greatest works, in both fact and fiction, of the Ripper phenomenon. It clearly shows how this deranged serial killer became transformed into an illusory character simply by virtue of his elementary medical know-how. Thanks to the films and the fiction, the real killer has metamorphosed into the 'other' Jack the Ripper. The latter, with his black bag and top hat, is a variant of a real human being, the likes of which are well known today: Peter Sutcliffe and Jeffrey Dahmer, to name just two.

During the writing of this book I was not concerned about having a new suspect because, inevitably, new suspects become old ones and the search continues for someone else; but I do have a *preferred* candidate who is mentioned towards the end of the book.

Finally, *Jack the Ripper - Through the Mists of Time* is a sort of breathing space; it is a moment in time when we can, and should, see what has happened to the Ripper machine. The story has been racing along at speed for over one hundred and twenty years. With all its fantasy, fiction and theories it has become like a rapidly spreading virus that mutates at every opportunity, giving rise to more concepts and beliefs.

The time has come to pull back the reins of this awesome myth and look at what the murderer might really have been like - and what we have made him.

FOREWORD TO THE REVISED EDITION

The spectre of Jack the Ripper haunts the streets of Whitechapel as much today as it did over one hundred and twenty years ago. I use the word 'spectre' because in many ways that's what the killer was, or rather what the newspapers of the day transformed him into. It was as if 'Jack' became invisible during that autumn of terror when his razor-sharp knife carved an everlasting impression in criminal history. In 2009 a Channel 5 documentary entitled *Jack the Ripper: Tabloid Killer - Revealed*, named Frederick Best as being the author of a letter sent to the Central News Agency in 1888 and signed 'Jack the Ripper.' Best worked for the *Star* as a freelance journalist. A sample of his writing was obtained for analysis, and a leading handwriting expert concluded the writing in both letters was by the same hand. Not only did this hoax boost sales of the *Star* edition, it gave the killer a chilling and unforgettable nickname. Reporting the terrible mutilations on the victims no doubt intensified public interest as well as creating fear and panic.

Today the same question is asked: Was the murderer an insane Jew, a sailor, an artist, a slaughterman, a black magician, or even a secret agent?

Interest in those ghastly crimes is sustained as Ripper-related programmes come to our screens, and viewing is occasionally punctuated by re-runs of Ripper movies that are sure to entertain us. In 2009 a new three-part drama called *Whitechapel* was shown on TV and became the most watched series for that year; and so Jack the Ripper's audience – if we can call it such – becomes bigger with every passing year.

My interest in the crimes is revitalised whenever a Ripper documentary is shown or a new theory is published. Writers and enthusiasts look in every corner hoping to find 'new' information that will give us a clearer insight into the period when the murders occurred. On rare occasions something remarkable turns up. In 2007 an item was listed on eBay and turned out to be one of the most important photographic discoveries on the Ripper case for a quarter of a century. The photograph was listed as showing a Whitechapel street in the 1890s. The banner heading included the words, 'Scene of Infamous Whitechapel Murders London.'

Fortunately, the only bidder was author Philip Hutchinson, a respected Ripper tour guide. His relentless research proved conclusively that the photo showed Dutfield's Yard where Ripper-victim Elizabeth Stride was murdered in 1888. The shot was taken circa 1900 and shows the exact spot where Stride was killed. The yard itself would have looked exactly the same as it did when the murder occurred. The image appeared for the first time in Hutchinson's remarkable book, *The Jack the Ripper Location Photographs*.

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People like me find such photographs immensely interesting. We want to delve deeper into the Ripper's world; we scrutinise the faces of the people who lived in those 'dark' days and nights, and our emotions are stirred by images of the long-gone streets once inhabited by those poor, hapless ladies who will never be forgotten.

Since the first edition of this book was published in 2002 several new solutions to the mystery have gone into print, and the film *From Hell* gave fans of horror a psychic Inspector Abberline (played by Johnny Depp), who rises from the smoke of an opium den to track down an aristocratic, gentleman Ripper.

And so the Ripper machine races on, taking with it all that is plausible and factual, all that is glamorised and entertaining . . . all that is pure nonsense.

As previously written, this book does not offer a new theory to end all theories. My preferred candidate for the role of Jack the Ripper has never been a likely suspect, but in 2008 the Broadmoor files relating to this person were made available for public viewing. Did these files contain the key to solving the killer's identity once and for all? Well, I wasn't going to let such an opportunity pass by.

This volume has been updated and revised. During its preparation I have been able to make changes which, I hope, make it more worthy as a comment on a modern cultural myth.

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Stuart A Hodgson deserves special thanks for his lifelike recreations of Mary Ann Nichols, Catharine Eddowes, and the lady of whom so little is known – Mary Jane Kelly.

QUICK REFERENCE

Dr Robert Anderson (Later, Sir)

On 31 August 1888 was appointed Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police CID. Retired in 1901 and was knighted.

Frederick Abberline

Scotland Yard detective inspector. Supervised enquiries on the ground during the Whitechapel murders investigation.

Wynne Edwin Baxter

Coroner who presided over the inquests of Mary Ann Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Alice McKenzie and Frances Coles.

Dr William Frederick Blackwell

The first doctor to be summoned to the scene of the Stride murder. On his arrival (at 1.16 a.m.) he pronounced her dead.

Dr Thomas Bond

Police Surgeon to A Division (Westminster). Attended the murder scene of Mary Jane Kelly, and inspected the body of Alice McKenzie at the mortuary. He believed that McKenzie was a Ripper victim.

Dr Frederick Gordon Brown

City of London police surgeon. He attended the Catharine Eddowes' murder scene.

Inspector Joseph Chandler

The first senior police officer at the scene of Annie Chapman's murder.

Louis Diemschutz

Steward of the International Workingmen's Educational Club, 40 Berner Street. He discovered the body of Elizabeth Stride in Dutfield's Yard.

Joseph Lawende

At 1.35 a.m., 30 September 1888, Lawende observed a man and woman talking at the entrance to Church Passage which led to Mitre Square where Catharine Eddowes was murdered a few minutes later. His friends, Harry Harris and Joseph Levy, took no notice of the couple. At a later date Lawende was shown Eddowes' body at the mortuary. He identified her by the clothes she was wearing.

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Dr Rees Ralph Llewellyn

Local Whitechapel doctor. Was summoned from his surgery at 4.00 a.m., 31 August 1888, to examine the body of Mary Ann Nichols who had been murdered in Buck's Row.

Police Constable Alfred Long

On the morning of 30 September 1888 at 2.55 a.m. Long discovered a torn piece of Catharine Eddowes' bloodstained apron on the ground in front of the staircase of 108-119 Wentworth Model Dwellings in Goulston Street. Written on the wall above the apron was the chalked message, 'The Juwes are the men that will not be blamed for nothing.'

George Lusk

President of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee. On October 16 1888 he received a parcel containing half a human kidney and a letter. The kidney was allegedly taken from the body of Catharine Eddowes.

Dr Roderick MacDonald

Coroner at Mary Jane Kelly's inquest.

Sir Melville Macnaghten

Joined the Metropolitan Police Force as Assistant Chief Constable, CID, in 1889. Became Assistant Commissioner, CID, from 1903 to 1913. In 1894 he wrote a confidential report (referred to as the 'Macnaghten Memoranda') in which he named three people whom he believed were more likely to have been Jack the Ripper than Thomas Cutbush. The three people were Montague John Druitt, Aaron Kosminski and Michael Ostrog.

Dr George Bagster Phillips

The Divisional Police Surgeon for H Division (Whitechapel). He examined the bodies of Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride and Mary Jane Kelly all in situ. He attended the post-mortem of Catharine Eddowes.

Israel Schwartz

On 30 September 1888 at 12.45 a.m. Schwartz saw a man and woman arguing at the gateway to Dutfield's Yard in Berner Street. He witnessed the woman being thrown onto the pavement. After the murder of Elizabeth Stride (which occurred in the Yard) Schwartz was taken to view the body at the mortuary and identified her as the woman he had seen arguing.

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Dr George William Sequeira

The first doctor to arrive at Mitre Square where Catharine Eddowes was murdered. He pronounced her dead and awaited the arrival of Dr Frederick Gordon Brown.

Major Henry Smith

Acting Commissioner of the City of London Police. He took charge of the Eddowes' murder investigation.

Chief Inspector Donald Sutherland Swanson

Was in charge of the Whitechapel murders investigation from September 1 to October 6 1888. Thereafter he was desk officer under the leadership of Dr Robert Anderson. Swanson read every report – in fact anything pertaining to the case – and acquired an intimate knowledge of the murders.

Sir Charles Warren

Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police from 1886 to 1888. His resignation was accepted on the day of Mary Kelly's murder. The failure of the police to apprehend the Whitechapel murderer had nothing to do with his resignation.

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1

Murder in Whitechapel

The police files on the Jack the Ripper case were officially closed in 1892, and it was the opinion of the Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan CID, Dr Robert Anderson, that the person responsible for the murders was dangerous only to a certain class of women who lived in and around Whitechapel in the East End of London. He also went on to say that the general public who lived in the area where the murders were committed were just as safe during the crime period as they had been before and after it. Anderson was of course referring to the prostitute class, women of the night who plied the age-old trade on the rough-and-ready streets of the East End. They must have been hardened women to indulge in such activities.

Venereal disease was rife amongst them; in fact, all sorts of diseases ran through the poor working-class population, and death itself hung like a shadow in every street. The rigours of East End life were intolerable to some and suicide was the only means of escape – suicide by cutting one's own wrist or by jumping into the river. Fifty-five per cent of the children died before they were five years old. The West End was more prosperous, healthier, but even so the figure for this region was about eighteen per cent. Little kids would go out on the streets thieving and begging – they knew hunger and poverty and ill health. If they were lucky enough to make it into their teenage years they invariably had to leave their homes to make room for an ever-increasing family. For the boys who did make it into men, and who were fortunate enough to find work, the wages were extremely low, the hours long and the conditions were often intolerable. The jobs requiring prolonged physical strength were usually taken on by workers from the cloth industries or by country folk from areas where farming had started to decline. The country workers were fitter and healthier people, some of whom became dockland labourers, railway men and corn and timber merchants. Less fortunate men and women could find themselves in a 'sweatshop', the latter being a place where 'sweated labour' took place – a term meaning long hours work for low wages. It was a difficult struggle, particularly for men with families to keep. You could earn up to thirty shillings a week if times were good, and that would involve working for

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fourteen hours a day, seven days a week, in a sweatshop. The work was mundane. Women could, for example, sew linings into trousers or stitch buttons onto pants, repair shirts and other garments. Other jobs included making matchboxes, shelling peas or sack-making. The pay was pitiable. Today it is difficult for us to imagine the living conditions in those times. Empty houses were non-existent; the East End was teeming with people.

Then there were the common lodging houses. In Whitechapel alone there were over two hundred of them and they provided accommodation for over eight thousand people. You could rent a reasonably comfortable room for four shillings a week (that's about twenty pence in today's money!), and if you didn't spend the rest of your money on ale, as many did, you had to watch out for the pickpockets and ruffians. But let's be sure about the situation in this area, an area which would become known all over the world as being the hunting ground for the most talked about serial killer. Mile End, Spitalfields and Whitechapel, all sections of the East End, harboured working-class people as well as the homeless. Crime, violence and prostitution were all clearly abundant amongst this underprivileged and mostly forgotten section of the metropolis. Yet many decent and honest people lived there too. There *was* happiness to be found on the streets. Women would sit at the front of their houses during the day enjoying a chat with their friends; children could play and enjoy themselves, and laughter occasionally rang out. For some though, the loss of a job would inevitably mean no money, no food and a merciless struggle for survival.

'Dossing' was a term frequently used and referred to the hiring of a bed for a night in one of the many common lodging houses. In such establishments both men and women would prepare food and wash their clothes. The sleeping quarters consisted of rows of beds on both sides of the same room and the price was four pence per bed per night. In some of the other lodging houses you could get a cheaper kip for the night. A rope was tied across a room and you had to lean against it and go to sleep – sounds impossible to me – but that's what they did back then. I have mentioned prostitution, which was taken up out of necessity rather than choice. Some women worked for very low wages and sold their bodies as well. Although this was the case in the East End, and no doubt many other depressed areas in towns around the country, most girls were brought up to be housewives, and were taught domestic skills. Ladies who had received a decent education found jobs as house servants, nurses, bookkeepers and clerks. Other than that there were the sweated trades of the textile industries. Many women worked as cigarette makers or laundresses and there were varying types of factory work, although men's wages were higher. Women were

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considered to be less reliable on account of them leaving work to get married. At the Bryant and May matchworks in East London, women worked ten hours a day for four shillings per week, and they had to pay fines for uncleanliness or breaking the rules of the work place. British social reformer and theosophist, Annie Besant, who was a member of the Fabian Society, drew attention to the conditions of the match girls and helped them in their struggle for more pay and fair play. However, low wages and long hours were part of the working system and the situation was taken very much for granted. Many women who took to prostitution for extra money did so reluctantly. In October 1888 there were an estimated 1,200 'unfortunates' in Whitechapel alone.

The Assistant Commissioner was probably correct in stating that only a 'certain class of women' was at risk during the period of murders. In Whitechapel you could get a 'knee-trembler' for four pence but the women were unclean and mostly ugly. They would perform in darkened doorways, backyards, alleys and courts. Even at the height of these atrocious murders, prostitutes were prepared to carry on with their business, in spite of knowing that they might meet this deranged and vicious murderer.

It would be fair to say that the police at the time were unflinching in their efforts to apprehend the murderer. It is indeed a great pity that they were not to be rewarded. Crime was commonplace in this part of London and the police had their work cut out for them. Some of the worst streets were Thrawl Street, Dorset Street and Flower and Dean Street - the very same streets that the Ripper knew well and where he could mingle without attracting attention. In these streets the police were treated with hostility. This only made their job more difficult in an increasingly populated small area of London. Irish immigrants came to settle there after the 1846 potato famine and 1881 onwards saw the influx of Jews from the pogroms of Russia and Russian Poland. Their numbers increased, and within a few years there was an estimated 60,000 Jews in East London. These new arrivals lived in small and well-defined areas; they were housed together in tenement blocks or new model dwellings which became more Jewish as time went on. After being persecuted for so long abroad many of them had scant regard for 'truth', and to this end they would say anything to enable them to get along. The Cockneys didn't like them, however, because, apart from being 'foreign' they were prepared to live together in large numbers and they would work for less pay - which of course made it more difficult for anybody else to get a job.

Now that we possess a little knowledge about Victorian life in the East End we can begin to look at the murders themselves. The question is, how

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many murders can be attributed to the man who became known as 'Jack the Ripper'? The general consensus today, amongst writers and crime historians, is that the number was four or five.

Sir Melville Macnaghten was the Chief Constable of the CID, Scotland Yard, from 1890 to 1903. He had joined the Metropolitan Police in 1889 and in 1894 he wrote a document which became known as the 'Macnaghten Memoranda'. Although he was not personally involved in the Ripper investigation he made certain statements about the Whitechapel murderer. He wrote that the murderer had five victims and five victims only. He listed their names and the dates when they died. They were:

1. Mary Ann Nichols, 31 August 1888.
2. Annie Chapman, 8 September 1888.
3. Elizabeth Stride, 30 September 1888.
4. Catharine Eddowes, 30 September 1888.
5. Mary Jane Kelly, 9 November 1888.

You will have noticed that Elizabeth Stride and Catharine Eddowes were both murdered on the same date. All five murders occurred in Spitalfields and Whitechapel in a ten-week period and in an area covering approximately one square mile. There were two other murders previous to that of Nichols which were thought to be the work of the Ripper due to the terrible injuries sustained by the victims.

On 2 April, Bank Holiday Monday, that same year, a 45-year-old prostitute by the name of Emma Elizabeth Smith was attacked in the early hours of the morning as she travelled home along Osborne Street. She had been followed by three men who seized the woman, beat her up and then robbed her. She managed to reach her home on George Street and from there she was taken to the London Hospital where she died three days later. A few months later, on Bank Holiday Monday, 6 August, 39-year-old Martha Tabram and her friend, Mary Connolly (nicknamed 'Pearly Poll'), went out in the evening for drinks and a good time. During the course of the evening they met up with two guardsmen and went drinking in various public houses along the Whitechapel High Street. Just before midnight the two women went their separate ways. Martha went off toward a street called George Yard with her client, whilst Pearly Poll took the other soldier to Angel Alley for a knee-trembler. At 4.50 a.m. a man named John Reeves discovered Martha's lifeless body on the first-floor landing of George Yard

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Building: a block of dwellings in George Yard Street. She had been stabbed repeatedly – thirty-nine stab wounds in all. It has been generally accepted, for some years now, that the Whitechapel murderer had five victims. Emma Smith had been beaten and robbed by a bunch of thugs. And as for poor Martha Tabram – well, although it was a frenzied attack, it was dissimilar to the murders which occurred afterwards. Is it possible that she was the first victim of Jack the Ripper? Can anybody know for sure? Personally, I am not convinced she was.

The first victim of the Ripper to be considered here is 43-year-old Mary Ann Nichols, known as 'Polly' to her acquaintances. She was married at nineteen and had five children by her husband. In 1880 the relationship ended, probably due to her drinking habits, and she took to prostitution to make money. Mary Ann Nichols had been drinking on the night of 30 August. She spent her money. All she needed was four pence for her doss; just four pence would have saved her life, but she met the wrong client.

At 3.30 a.m. people were making off to work. One such person was Charles Cross, a carman (cart driver). He was walking down Buck's Row at 3.40 when he spotted a dark shape lying in front of a gateway which led into a stable yard. The only available light was from a gas lamp which stood at the far end of the street. Cross went over to investigate and saw that it was the body of a woman. He stooped forward to get a closer look when he heard footsteps coming along the pavement. It was another carman, a chap named Robert Paul who, like Cross, was on his way to work. Paul moved to one side, not wanting to get involved, but he was called over to have a look at the body. The men decided to find a policeman. Only minutes afterwards Police Constable John Neil, who was on his beat, came down Buck's Row when he noticed the body. Aided by his bull's-eye lantern it became immediately obvious that the woman had been murdered – her throat had been cut. She was lying lengthways along the street. Her bonnet was on the ground next to her. PC Neil stayed at the scene and was soon to be joined by PC John Thain, who had noticed Neil waving his lamp for assistance. Meanwhile, the two carmen had found a policeman at the corner of Hanbury Street and Baker's Row. He was PC Mizen. After listening to the two men he carried on to Buck's Row whilst Cross and Paul continued on their way to work. So, three policemen were at the crime scene within minutes of the body having been discovered. A doctor had to be summoned, and it was PC Thain who informed Dr Rees Ralph Llewellyn of the incident at Buck's Row. PC Mizen went for assistance and was soon to return with an 'ambulance'. In those days this was a trolley, somewhat similar to a gurney. The doctor pronounced the woman dead and the body was taken to Old

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Montague Street Workhouse Infirmary. He noticed that there was only a small amount of blood in the gutter; most of it had been soaked up by the woman's clothing. Dr Llewellyn was in no doubt that she was killed at the location where she was found. Her throat had been cut and there were several abdominal incisions.

As the injuries were inflicted from left to right, the doctor concluded that the murderer may have been left-handed. There was no doubt at all that the knife used in the attack was fairly sharp and had a long blade. There had been no signs of a struggle during the attack and there were no blood stains on Polly Nichols' breasts or the front of her clothing. This is an important point because it tells us that Polly was lying down when her throat was cut; also it tells us that her heart had stopped beating, otherwise blood, which is under pressure due to the rhythm of the heart, would have spurting out onto her clothing. It is clear that the murderer strangled her first before commencing the knife assault. PC Neil had previously patrolled Buck's Row at 3.15 a.m. and seen nothing suspicious then. The arrival of Charles Cross at 3.40 indicates that Polly was murdered between these times.

The police questioned many inhabitants and workers in that locality but their inquiries failed to produce a viable lead.

The second murder took place on 8 September in the back yard of Number 29 Hanbury Street, Spitalfields - a lodging house which was only half a mile from the site of Polly Nichols' murder. The woman's name was Annie Chapman (known locally as 'Dark Annie'). She was forty-seven years old at the time of her death. Annie was married in 1869 and had three children. She had variously lived in Windsor and West London. She left her family behind in 1882 and this break-up may have been due to her drunken and immoral ways. However, her decline eventually took her to the East End, and from May onwards in 1888 she lived mainly at Crossingham's lodging house. It was managed by Timothy Donovan and stood opposite Miller's Court where the final Ripper victim lived.

At 1.30 a.m., or thereabouts, on 8 September, Annie was in the kitchen at Crossingham's lodgings. She was undernourished, feeling unwell, and had no money for her bed. Annie was asked to leave, and at 2 a.m. she was wandering around the locality probably hoping to pick up a punter, which she eventually did. Nobody knows what she did or where she went for the next three hours or so. In all probability Annie Chapman kept on the move until her luck was in - or so she thought.

She picked up a client just before 5.30 a.m. and judging by the events which were to follow, it is almost certain that this man was Jack the Ripper.

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At 5.30 the same morning a lady called Elizabeth Long was on her way to Spitalfields market and her route took her down Hanbury Street, a street consisting of terraced lodging houses. Liz was certain of the time because of the chimes of a nearby clock. As she walked down the street she noticed a man and woman talking to each other just in front of Number 29. The man said to her, 'Will you?' to which she replied, 'Yes.' Dawn was just breaking and she managed to get a good look at the woman, whom she later identified as Annie Chapman. The man's face was turned away but Liz thought he looked about forty years old and was a little taller than the woman. She said he looked like a foreigner. He was wearing a dark coat and a deerstalker hat and according to Liz had a 'shabby genteel' appearance. She carried on walking but did not look back.

There were two doors at the front of the house and they were side by side; the door on the right was the entrance to the premises whilst the left side door led into a narrow indoor passage about twenty-five feet long which ran to the backyard. The streets became busier as it started to get lighter. It was Saturday and workers were preparing to go to market. John Richardson, the son of Amelia who lived and worked at Number 29, entered the backyard at 4.45 a.m. to check the cellar-door padlock. The front and back doors were always unlocked to facilitate the coming and going of lodgers. At the end of the narrow passage were a couple of stone steps leading down into the backyard. John checked the cellar door and then trimmed some leather off his work boots. It wasn't sunrise yet but there was just enough light for him to complete the task.

John Richardson was in the yard for a couple of minutes only, and as he found everything in order he went off to work. A carpenter named Albert Cadosh (who lived next door at Number 27), went into his backyard to use the lavatory at around the same time that Liz Long observed Annie with her client. Cadosh heard noises from the yard of Number 29, and shortly after he heard something fall against the fence which separated the backyards. He didn't pay any particular attention to the noises and went off to work. There is no doubt that young Mr Cadosh was literally only feet away from the Ripper as he began his onslaught. A man by the name of John Davies, who lived with his wife and sons at Number 29, discovered Annie's body at about 6 a.m. She was lying at the foot of the stone steps, parallel to the wooden fence that separated the two yards.

The sight which confronted poor Davies was so shocking that he ran straight out into the street for help. He came across two workmen who, after glancing at the corpse, went off to fetch help. Davies then went to Commercial Street Police Station before returning to Hanbury Street.

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Inspector Joseph Chandler was the first officer to arrive at the scene. After viewing the body he sent for the Divisional Surgeon and for extra help. At 6.30 a.m. Dr George Bagster Phillips, the police surgeon, arrived. Shortly after his arrival he ordered the body to be taken to the mortuary. It was then that Phillips discovered the contents of Annie's pocket lying in a neat pile: a piece of course muslin, two combs and two farthings. This seemingly deliberate act was taken up by author Stephen Knight in his book *Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution*, which I shall be discussing later on.

Hundreds of folk had by now gathered in Hanbury Street. The inquest into Annie Chapman's death was held at the Working Lad's Institute and was conducted by Coroner Wynne Baxter, who had also presided over the inquest of Mary Nichols at the same establishment. Dr Phillips gave his testimony on 14 September and was recalled at a later date to give further evidence with respect to the mutilation of Annie's body. It is necessary here to give a brief summary of how she was killed and the nature of her injuries.

Annie was found lying on her back, with her knees pointing upwards. Her face and tongue were swollen and the tongue could be seen sticking out a little between her front teeth. The throat had been cut deeply with force; the incision went right round the neck. The abdomen had been opened up and the intestines had been lifted out of the body and placed over the shoulder. The uterus and parts of the bladder and vagina were missing and could not be found.

Annie Chapman was firstly strangled and her throat was cut as she lay on the ground. Dr Phillips thought that the weapon used was a sharp, narrow-bladed knife up to eight inches in length and possibly even longer. He thought that the murderer showed considerable anatomical knowledge. It was his opinion that the woman had been dead for at least two hours, which placed the time of her death at 4.30 a.m. The murder took place on the spot where the body was found. If the doctor's estimated time of death was correct, then the testimonies of John Richardson, Elizabeth Long and Albert Cadosh were questionable. In the end the police sided with Dr Phillips, although he did admit that he could have been wrong in his estimate owing to the fact that the air was cold and there was much loss of blood and body heat. I think we have to say that the good doctor was almost certainly wrong; Annie Chapman was murdered between 5.30 and 6 a.m.

A search of the backyard revealed certain clues, one of which was a wet leather apron found near a water tap and which was subsequently identified as belonging to John Richardson. The finding of the apron initially caused some concern as reports of a man nicknamed 'Leather Apron' had already been doing the rounds. After the Nichols' murder, prostitutes told police

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about a man who had been menacing their kind and had said to them, on various occasions, that he would rip them up.

On 10 September, Sergeant William Thick of H Division (the Metropolitan designated area which covered Whitechapel) arrested John Pizer, a 38-year-old boot finisher. Pizer, a Polish Jew, often wore a leather apron and used long, sharp knives for his trade. This man had an alibi for the night of the Polly Nichols murder. He was in Holloway, several miles away, and had spoken to a policeman about a glow in the sky which was emanating from a fire at London Docks. This took place in the early hours of 31 August, so he couldn't have been in two places at the same time. Sergeant Thick had known him for a long time and at Annie Chapman's inquest he testified that Pizer was known as 'Leather Apron'. John Pizer was cleared of any involvement in the murders.

What could have been a vital clue turned out to be a false lead. Part of an envelope was found with the letter M in a man's handwriting on one side, and on the reverse was the seal of the Sussex Regiment. Also found was a screwed up piece of paper containing two pills. Inspector Chandler's enquiries into stationery bearing the regimental seal failed to produce any significant leads.

The letter M on the envelope has been viewed as being a clue left by the killer himself and this will be discussed in the chapter named 'Jack's Diary?' Finally, there were markings on Annie's finger where she had worn two brass rings, and it was thought that her killer may have taken them. The rings, however, did not turn up. Inspector Frederick Abberline, of Scotland Yard, was informed of the murder in Hanbury Street. He was a most able detective and possessed intimate knowledge of the district where the murders had occurred. He was in charge of the men on the ground and there is little doubt that he was the best officer for that particular case. In 1888 he had served for fourteen years as Inspector for H Division.

On 10 September, two days after the murder of Annie Chapman, a Vigilance Committee was set up with the aim of assisting the police in their hunt for the killer. The elected president of the committee was George Lusk, who resided in the East End. Any tip-offs or information received from the public was passed on to the authorities. Sir Charles Warren, the Commissioner of the Met, was happy with the aims and practices set up by Lusk and his men.

We now come to what is frequently referred to as the 'double event'. Two murders in one night and both committed within a couple of hours. The murdered women were Elizabeth Stride and Catharine Eddowes. It is my

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belief that Stride was not a Ripper victim. However, most writers on the subject, and indeed the police at the time, believe she was. In order to present a complete picture of the murders it is essential that the circumstances surrounding this murder are included. Elizabeth Stride, née Gustafsdotter, was born on 27 November 1843 in Torslanda near Gothenburg in Sweden, and she came to London in 1866. She married John Thomas Stride in 1869 and it has been written that she had nine children by him. The marriage broke up in 1881. In 1885 she was living in Dorset Street with a man named Michael Kidney, but the relationship was a stormy one and Liz walked out on him several times. In September 1888 she was living in lodgings at 32 Flower and Dean Street, and had stayed there on previous occasions. Liz Stride was murdered in a small court in Berner Street, known as Dutfield's Yard. The court had two wooden gates to its entrance. The International Working Men's Educational Club stood to the right, and on the left was a row of terraced cottages. I have summarized the salient features of the events leading up to the murder of Elizabeth Stride. They are as follows:

11.45 p.m. to 12.00 a.m.

Matthew Packer (owner of a greengrocer's shop on Berner Street) told two private detectives that he sold half a pound of black grapes to a man who entered his shop in the company of a woman. A few days later he identified the body of Elizabeth Stride as being that woman. Unfortunately, Packer was a publicity seeker and the police regarded him as unreliable. He was not called as an inquest witness.

12.30 a.m.

PC William Smith, of the Met, was on his beat in Berner Street and saw Liz standing with a man opposite Dutfield's yard.

12.45 a.m.

Israel Schwartz, a Jewish immigrant, was passing down Berner Street and when he got to the wooden gates to the court he noticed a woman standing in the gateway. She was accosted by a man who spoke to her. He tried to pull her into the street but ended up throwing her onto the pavement. The woman screamed half-heartedly. Schwartz crossed over the street and observed another man who was lighting his pipe as he watched the incident. Liz's attacker called out 'Lipski' (a derogatory term used to insult Jews), apparently at the pipe man.

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Schwartz walked on but soon ran off as he was under the impression that the 'pipe man' was following him. Schwartz later identified Liz as being the woman he had seen being ill-treated.

1 a.m. (approx)

Louis Diemschutz, Steward of the International WME Club, was returning from work on his pony and cart and turned into the gateway of Dutfield's Yard. As he did so the pony shied over to the left and Diemschutz noticed a heap on the ground. After prodding it with his whip he got down from his cart and lit a match to get a better look. He realised it was the body of a woman and ran directly into the club for assistance. He returned with two club members who discovered that the woman's throat had been slashed; the blood had trickled down her neck and into the gutter. Diemschutz and one of the club members ran off in search of a police officer.

It wasn't long before a small crowd started to gather near the gates to the court. Dr Blackwell was summoned and arrived at Berner Street at 1.16 a.m. He concluded that the woman had been dead about twenty minutes to half an hour. It is therefore reasonable to assume that Liz was murdered at about 12.55 a.m., bearing in mind she was alive at 12.45 a.m. In fact, Louis Diemschutz thought that the murder had just been committed as he drove in through the gates, and the attacker was hiding somewhere in the court itself.

Dr Blackwell performed the autopsy on the body while Dr Phillips took notes. Liz had suffered a clean cut to the throat; the cut was from left to right and was six inches in length. Death had resulted from loss of blood from the left carotid artery. At the inquest of Elizabeth Stride, Dr Phillips stated that the knife used to inflict the wound was not sharp and pointed but that it was round and one inch across. He also pointed out that the injuries were very much different to those of Chapman, in that Chapman's neck had been cut all round and down to the vertebral column.

The second murder of that dreadful night was to occur in gloomy Mitre Square, a mere ten minutes' walk from Berner Street. Mitre Square lay within the jurisdiction of the City of London Police Force, headed by Acting Commissioner Major Henry Smith. The woman who was savagely butchered in the early hours of 30 September was Catharine Eddowes. Cathy had told friends that she was married to Thomas Conway, a former soldier, in 1862. She had three children by him but in 1880 the couple split

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up and went their separate ways. Cathy was soon to meet another man, John Kelly, and she stayed with him up until her death. They shared lodgings at Flower and Dean Street. Cathy lived to be forty-six years old and was described as being a jolly soul, often heard singing. She was five feet five inches tall with dark hair and hazel eyes.

It was on the evening of 29 September that Cathy was arrested in Aldgate Street for making a disturbance. Two policemen took her to Bishopsgate Police Station where, due to her drunken state, she was placed in a cell until she had sobered up. At 1 a.m. she was reasonably stable enough to be allowed to go home and so she set off in the direction of Houndsditch and Mitre Square.

The next section of the story is of great importance because it furnishes us with a description of a man who could have been Jack the Ripper. At 1.35 a.m. three Jews were just leaving the Imperial Club, situated on Duke Street. Leading off Duke Street was a narrow passage (Church Passage), which ran directly into Mitre Square. The three men were Joseph Lawende, Harry Harris and Joseph Levy. As they left the club they saw a man and a woman talking quietly at the corner of Church Passage; there was certainly nothing notable or abnormal about the couple. Although the lighting was poor, Lawende could see enough detail to be able to furnish the police with a description of the man. His two companions did not pay particular attention to the man or the woman.

Cathy was wearing a black bonnet and black jacket that night, and I have to point out that Lawende did not see the woman's face as he passed by – she had her back towards him. At a later stage he identified Cathy Eddowes by her clothing only, so there remains the possibility that it was another couple. One must also bear in mind that Mitre Square was a secluded haunt for prostitutes. Although the attacker did not spend more than five minutes in the square, it was a very precarious location in which to be, from his point of view. Just opposite the scene of the crime stood Kearley and Tonge's warehouse where the watchman, George Morris, was working. The door to the warehouse was slightly open, but Morris heard nothing when the murder was taking place, which would have been between 1.35 and 1.45 a.m. At 1.40 a.m. PC James Harvey entered Church Passage, as it was part of his beat. He went to the end of the passage, without actually entering the square, and neither saw nor heard anything to attract his attention. The corner of the square where Cathy died was in near darkness, the closest lamp being about twenty yards away, and gas lamps in those days did not give out much light. It was 1.44 a.m. when PC Edward Watkins discovered the body. His beat usually took twelve to fourteen minutes to complete and

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he had previously entered Mitre Square at about 1.30 a.m. and seen nothing unusual with the aid of his lamp. The shocking sight of Cathy's mutilated body sent Watkins running over to the warehouse where he summoned George Morris to his aid. Morris ran off to get help whilst the anxious PC Watkins guarded the dead body.

Dr Sequeira, who lived close by, was alerted by one of the local policemen. He arrived at 1.55 a.m. and determined that the woman had been dead for not more than fifteen minutes. The City of London Police Surgeon, Dr Frederick Gordon Brown, arrived at 2 a.m. and conducted a more detailed examination of the body. Other police officers were to arrive at the scene, notably Major Henry Smith himself. The immediate area was searched by the police and anybody seen in the locality was questioned. At 2.55 a.m. PC Alfred Long was on his beat in Goulston Street, a few blocks away from Mitre Square, when he discovered what was the only clue ever left by the Ripper. It was a piece of Cathy Eddowes' apron lying at the foot of some stairs leading into 108–119 Wentworth Model Dwellings (cheap houses built for Jewish immigrants). The apron was bloodstained and had faecal matter upon it. It was compared to the torn apron worn by Cathy and the match was exact. Many authors and crime historians believe that Jack the Ripper had wiped his heavily bloodstained hands and probably his knife on this material as he made his way home, but there is another explanation as to why the Ripper tore a piece of apron from the murdered woman's clothing. PC Long had previously passed down Goulston Street at 2.20 a.m. and he stated that the apron was not there at that time. If this had been the case, then it would imply that Cathy's attacker had been hanging around in the vicinity for at least half an hour. This seems highly unlikely, but I believe there is a sound reason for this unusual behaviour. I shall discuss this aspect in a later chapter.

Above where the apron was found, PC Long also notice a chalked message which read: 'The Juwes are the men that will not be blamed for nothing'. This, now well-known message, has been a subject of discussion for many years. The word *Juwes* sparked off the imagination of one writer in the 1970s and his book had a big impact on the Ripper mystery. It is difficult to know how to interpret the words and it was uncertain at the time whether or not they had been written by the murderer. It was only after heated discussions that the words were finally erased. Sir Charles Warren gave the order; after all, Goulston Street was on his territory and not that of the City of London Police. It was part of a predominantly Jewish area, and with the recent events involving John Pizer there was a real possibility of riots or attacks on Jews.

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Now back to Joseph Lawende. The police came across him during the course of their enquiries and the description he gave to them, of the man seen talking to Cathy Eddowes, was published in the *Police Gazette* in October 1888. Lawende's description described the man as... *age 30, height five feet seven or eight inches, complexion fair, medium build. He was wearing a pepper-and-salt coloured loose jacket [a fine mixture of dark and light colour]. He wore a grey cloth cap, the peak being of the same material, and a reddish neckerchief tied in a knot; he had the appearance of a sailor.*

At the inquest (conducted by Samuel Frederick Langham), Lawende told the coroner that he doubted he would recognise the man again. Catharine Eddowes' body was mutilated in a most diabolical fashion. Dr Brown's post-mortem report on her injuries is very detailed. I have included a very brief description of them. The wounds and cuts inflicted on poor Catharine were extensive. The throat had been cut deeply. There were no traces of blood on the surrounding bricks or pavement. The intestines were drawn out and placed over the right shoulder. There was much disfigurement of the face, including fine cuts to both eyelids and a cut on each side of the cheek which peeled up forming a triangular flap. The left kidney had been carefully removed, as was the uterus. Both the kidney and uterus were taken away by her killer. From the killer's point of view this was an extremely daring crime when one considers the police presence in the area, and the fact that he might have been remembered if he was the man seen talking to Cathy. It was his invincibility that made him so frightening; and moreover, a name was soon to be coined for him which not only captured the public imagination, but ensured that this killer would never be forgotten.

The imaginative and perennial name 'Jack the Ripper' first appeared in a letter sent to the Central News Agency and received there on 27 September 1888. It was written in red ink and dated 25 September. It read:

Dear Boss,

I keep on hearing the police have caught me but they wont fix me just yet. I have laughed when they look so clever and talk about being on the right track. That joke about Leather Apron gave me real fits. I am down on whores and I shant quit ripping them till I do get buckled. Grand work the last job was. I gave the lady no time to squeal. How can they catch me now. I love my work and want to start again. You will soon hear of me with my funny little games. I saved some of the proper red stuff in a ginger beer bottle over the last job to write with but it went thick like glue and I cant use it. Red ink is fit enough I

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hope ha ha. The next job I do I shall clip the ladys ears off and send to the police officers just for jolly wouldnt you. Keep this letter back till I do a bit more work, then give it out straight. My knife's so nice and sharp I want to get to work right away if I get a chance. Good luck.

Yours truly
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There was a second postscript which I have not included. The envelope in which the letter came was addressed to 'the 'Boss'. Was it written by the murderer? The letter is mocking and almost jovial in content. It was treated as a joke by the news editor but a second communication was received by the agency on 1 October. It was a postcard and undoubtedly in the same hand as the writer of the 'Dear Boss' letter. It Read:

I wasnt coddling dear old Boss when I gave you the tip, you ll hear about saucy Jackys work tomorrow double event this time number one squealed a bit couldnt finish straight off. had not time to get ears for police thanks for keeping last letter back till I got to work again.

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After careful consideration, the letter and postcard were sent to the Metropolitan Police who, after studying them, were rather concerned about their content and, more importantly, who had written them. Copies of both letter and postcard were printed onto posters which were put on public display. The letters were also printed in various newspapers. The question of course was, 'Do you recognise this handwriting?' In hindsight, it would have facilitated the investigation had the correspondence not been published at all. The police were inundated with hoax letters from cranks - many of which were signed 'Jack the Ripper'.

As if the letters weren't enough, George Lusk received a cardboard box wrapped in brown paper on 16 October. In it was half a human kidney and a letter which Mr Lusk thought was from the Ripper himself. The letter began with 'Mr Lusk Sor' and ended, 'Catch me when you can Mishter Lusk'. It was as if the writer was trying to sound Irish. Lusk thought the matter over and on the advice of his committee friends, the kidney was taken for examination to Dr Openshaw, Curator of the Pathological Museum at the

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London Hospital. Dr Openshaw told a *Star* newspaper reporter that in his opinion the specimen was indeed half a left human kidney, but he could not determine whether it was a man's or woman's, nor could he tell for what period of time it had been removed from the body, owing to the fact that it had been preserved in spirits. However, the doctor was misreported by the newspaper as saying that it was a 'ginny' kidney (meaning that it belonged to a heavy drinker), and that it came from a 45-year-old woman afflicted with Bright's disease. I shall return to what is now referred to as the 'Lusk Kidney' in a later chapter.

We now come to the final and perhaps most controversial victim of the Whitechapel murderer - Mary Jane Kelly. The details of Mary's earlier life cannot be definitely ascertained.

She was born in 1863 and by her own account she moved to Wales from Limerick when she was a small child. The story goes that she married a collier in 1879, but he died in a mining explosion a few years later. In 1884 Mary worked in a West End brothel from where she was taken to France by one of her clients. Apparently, not too happy abroad, she returned to London again and ended up in the East End. When she was not going steady with somebody she resorted to prostitution. Mary Kelly was about five feet seven inches tall. She was a well-built lass with blue eyes and dark blonde hair - all in all, an attractive girl. The real thread of her life can be picked up when she met Joseph Barnett in Commercial Street in 1887. Barnett, an Irish Cockney, was a labourer at Billingsgate market. There was an instant attraction between the two of them. He referred to her as 'Marie Jeanette.' They lived together in various lodgings in Spitalfields and Whitechapel and at the beginning of 1888 they rented a single room in Miller's Court off Dorset Street. The landlord was 37-year-old John McCarthy, who owned a grocer's shop at 27 Dorset Street, situated just at the corner of Miller's Court. Joseph and Mary's room was Number 13, a tiny, ill-furnished apartment which was situated on the right-hand side at the end of a narrow 20-foot passage which ran from Dorset Street, a street where many prostitutes lived.

Joe Barnett took care of Mary and frequently gave her money, although he was averse to her walking the streets and selling herself. On 30 October they had an argument and Joe walked out on her. He had previously been unemployed for some months and this may have put a strain on their relationship. He did continue to visit her after their break-up. On the afternoon of Thursday, 8 November, Mary spent some time with her friend, Maria Harvey, who was also a streetwalker. They went back to 13 Miller's

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Court, and in the evening Joe called in to tell Mary that he had no money. At the time of his visit, Maria was still there, but she left shortly after Joe's arrival. He did not like other prostitutes staying with Mary. After a short while he went away. Between 8 p.m. and 11.45 p.m. that same evening, Mary's exact movements are unknown; it is thought that she went out plying her trade in nearby public houses. From the testimonies of certain witnesses we can summarise most events that occurred from 11.45 p.m. onwards:

11.45 p.m.

Mary Ann Cox, a prostitute who lived in Miller's Court, was making her way home when she saw Mary Kelly in the company of a man in Dorset Street. Cox followed them into Miller's Court. Mary was drunk and her companion was described as 35 years old, stout and with a blotchy face and carrotty moustache. He was shabbily dressed and carried a pail of beer. The two Marys said goodnight to each other and went to their separate rooms. The man went inside with Mary and shortly afterwards Cox could hear Mary singing.

Midnight.

Mary Cox went back out onto the streets again and could still hear singing coming from Number 13.

1.00 a.m.

Cox returned to her room to warm her hands as it was a cold, rainy night. After a few minutes Cox went out again and Mary Kelly could be heard singing.

There was light emanating from her room. Elizabeth Prater, who lived in the room directly above Number 13, stood at the entrance to the court for twenty minutes. She was waiting for a man with whom she lived, but he did not turn up. She went into John McCarthy's shop and chatted with him. During this time she saw nobody entering or leaving the court. By this time the singing had stopped. At 1.30 a.m. she went up to her room. There was no sound coming from Mary Kelly's room. Elizabeth Prater then went to sleep.

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2.00 a.m.

Unemployed labourer, George Hutchinson, who lived on Commercial Street, met Mary Kelly near Flower and Dean Street. He was an acquaintance of hers and she asked him for sixpence, to which he replied he had spent all his money. Mary left Hutchinson and she carried on for a short distance. Hutchinson noticed a man who was walking towards Mary. He spoke to her and they carried on walking together, passing Hutchinson who was standing beneath a lamp. Apparently, he managed to remember details of the man's appearance which he passed on to the police at a later stage. He followed the couple back to the entrance passage to Miller's Court. They stood talking for about three minutes and then entered the court. Intrigued by the appearance of this man, Hutchinson waited outside the court until 3 a.m. Nobody exited Miller's Court during his vigil.

2.30 a.m. (approx)

Sarah Lewis, a laundress, went to stay with a friend in Miller's Court. As she walked down Dorset Street she observed a man standing opposite the entrance to the court. He was looking up the court and seemed to be waiting or looking for someone. (It is possible that this man was George Hutchinson.)

3 a.m.

Mrs Cox returned to her lodgings. There was no sound or light coming from Mary's room.

3.30 to 4.00 a.m.

Mrs Prater was awakened by her kitten and remembers hearing the muffled cry of, 'Oh murder!' This seemed to come from nearby. Sarah Lewis said that she heard a cry which seemed to come from the direction of Number 13. Mrs Cox, however, could not sleep that morning and she stated that there was *no* cry of 'murder' during the night. She heard someone leave the court at 5.45 a.m.

8 to 8.30 a.m.

Mrs Caroline Maxwell stated that she spoke to Mary Kelly at the entrance to Miller's Court. Mary said that she had been for a drink at 'Ringer's' (the Britannia public house), but had since been sick.

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8.45 a.m. (approx)

Mrs Maxwell saw Mary again, this time talking to a man outside Ringer's.

10.45 a.m.

Thomas Bowyer, who worked for John McCarthy, was sent to Number 13 to collect some rent money. It was the day of the Lord Mayor's Show and it was thought that Mr Bowyer might catch Mary at home before she went off to the procession. At this time Mary was dead. The door to her room was locked so Bowyer went around the corner to the broken window. He reached through the broken pane and moved the curtain to one side. He saw a heap of flesh on the bedside table and then his eyes fell upon the remains of a body upon the bed. Shocked by the gruesome and disturbing scene, he ran straight back to McCarthy with the terrible news.

The people who saw Mary Kelly's corpse in that little room off Dorset Street would never forget it. The existing photograph does not really convey the impact of the extensive mutilations which had been inflicted with unbelievable violence. Walter Dew (noted for his arrest of Dr Crippen) was a young detective officer actively engaged in the hunt for the Ripper. According to his memoirs he was one of the first police officers to view the mutilated corpse and found it to be a harrowing experience. Inspector Beck, of Commercial Street Police Station, was the first officer to arrive at the scene. He had received the news from John McCarthy and Thomas Bowyer. Dorset Street had to be cordoned off at both ends as news of the murder started filtering through the neighbourhood. Dr Phillips arrived at 11.15 a.m. but at this stage he could only view the body through the broken window. (It would have been immediately obvious to him that Mary was beyond help.) At 11.30 Inspector Abberline arrived, but was told by Dr Phillips not to enter the room until the arrival of the bloodhounds.

The bloodhounds did not reach Miller's Court; at 1.30 p.m. Superintendent Arnold, Head of H Division, arrived at the murder scene with the news that the order for their use had been revoked. The door to Number 13 was then duly forced by John McCarthy using a pickaxe. At approximately 4 p.m. Mary's body was taken to Shoreditch mortuary.

There was nothing in the way of clues to be found in the room. A few items were present: a candle stub, a pipe (belonging to Joe Barnett) and a

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ginger beer bottle. The ashes of the fire were still warm at 1.30 p.m. and contained the remains of women's clothing. Mary's clothes were neatly folded and had been placed over a chair at the foot of the bed. She was quite naked apart from a puffed sleeve blouse.

The post-mortem was carried out by Dr Phillips who was assisted by Dr Bond (the police surgeon from A Division), Dr Gordon Brown, Dr William Dukes and Dr Phillips' assistant. Dr Bond had not been present at the post-mortems of the previous victims, but after carefully studying medical notes relating to their injuries he wrote that the murderer had no scientific or anatomical knowledge. Mary Kelly was attacked in a most horrific and ferocious manner. Her face was mutilated beyond recognition. Both her breasts had been removed by more or less circular incisions. The abdomen had been opened up and the uterus and kidneys removed. The pericardium was open and the heart was absent. The missing heart was not found and I suspect that the murderer took it away with him. Dr Bond stated that rigor mortis had set in but increased during the examination, i.e. at 2 p.m. Aware that the exact time of death was difficult to pinpoint and that rigidity takes from 6 to 12 hours to set in (he wrote), he estimated the time of death to be 1 or 2 a.m. His deductions were based on the comparative coldness of the body at 2 p.m. and the fact that 'the recent remains of a meal' were found over the intestines and in the stomach. These conclusions are at great variance with Caroline Maxwell's testimony. Apparently, she spoke to Mary between 8 and 8.30 in the morning, (i.e. up to about seven hours after she was supposedly murdered).

The immediate cause of death was due to severance of the carotid artery. The cuts to the right thumb and back of the hand may have been sustained as Mary tried to defend herself, and the blood splashes on the wall to the right of the bed may have been caused by the throat being cut first as opposed to strangulation of the victim followed by severance of the throat. This would indicate a change in the modus operandi of the murderer, but this is not unusual. However, as she was so badly mutilated, it was impossible to say if strangulation had taken place and if the throat had been cut from left to right or vice versa.

The inquest took place on 12 November at Shoreditch Town Hall and was conducted by Roderick MacDonald. Past comment has been made on the fact that this inquest was over and done with in one day. The purpose of an inquest is to establish certain details which would include cause and time of death. These facts having been ascertained, the inquest was closed. Had it continued for another day or two, then George Hutchinson's testimony

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would have been heard in court, for on the evening of Monday 12 November he visited Commercial Street Police Station and made a statement. It contained a detailed description of the man he had seen with Mary on the night of the murder. Inspector Abberline questioned him thoroughly and believed his story to be true. Hutchinson gave a more detailed statement to the press. Part of it runs thus:

The man was about five feet six inches, and 34 or 35 years of age, with dark complexion and dark moustache, turned up at the ends. He was wearing a long dark coat, trimmed with astrakhan, a white collar, with black necktie, in which was affixed a horseshoe pin. He wore a pair of dark 'spats' with light buttons over button boots and displayed from his waistcoat a massive gold chain. His watch chain had a big seal with a red stone hanging from it. He had a heavy moustache curled up and dark eyes and bushy eyebrows. He had no side whiskers and his chin was clean-shaven. He looked like a foreigner. He carried a small parcel in his hand about eight inches long, and it had a strap round it.

I find it incredible that so much detail about a man's attire could be observed in, what must have been, a very short space of time. In my opinion his statement should have been treated with great caution, especially as Hutchinson went to the police three days after the murder in Miller's Court had taken place.

As the months passed by the initial fear and panic began to subside. By spring there had been no further murders of that kind and the extra police and plain clothes patrols were stopped. It was a question of finance rather than their belief that the Ripper had gone away, died or had been locked in an asylum. We can never know for sure what actually happened to him.

News of a similar atrocity surfaced in July 1889, when a woman was found murdered in Castle Alley off Whitechapel High Street. She was Alice McKenzie (nicknamed 'Clay Pipe Alice'), and she was found to have two wounds in the left side of the neck, a shallow wound running from the left breast to the navel and several scratches from this wound towards the genitals. *The Times* newspaper never doubted that 'Jack' was at it again, but the nature of the wounds were markedly different to those found on Nichols, Chapman, Eddowes and Kelly. The Ripper was mentioned again in February 1891, when Frances Coles was murdered in Swallow Gardens. Her throat had been cut whilst she was lying on the ground but there were no

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abdominal mutilations. Thomas Sadler, a ship's fireman and a nasty piece of work, was charged with her murder. However, the evidence against him was weak and he was set free. Detectives were interested to know what Sadler was doing at the time of the Ripper murders and their investigations showed conclusively that he was away at sea. After 1891 there were no more murders that could be compared to those of Jack the Ripper.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Metropolitan Police closed the file on the murders in 1892, the same time as Frederick Abberline retired from the force. Eleven years later he gave interviews for the *Pall Mall Gazette* in which he offered his opinion regarding a recently convicted murderer named Severin Klosowski (alias George Chapman). He believed that Klosowski was the Ripper. Walter Dew, writing in 1938, said that he could not express a definite opinion as to the identity of the murderer.

Dr Robert Anderson had overall charge of the investigation from 6 October 1888 up until 1892. In 1910 Anderson's memoirs had been published, and he had written that as a result of house-to-house enquiries the police came to the conclusion that the culprit was a low-class Jew. Readers were tantalised when he wrote, 'I should almost be tempted to disclose the identity of the murderer.' Chief Inspector Donald Swanson, who was in charge of the investigation from the beginning, passed all information he received to his superior, Dr Anderson. Swanson made pencil notes in his personal copy of Anderson's memoirs, *The Lighter Side of My Official Life*. When Swanson died some of his books and papers were handed down to his daughter, and upon her death they came into the possession of James Swanson, the Chief Inspector's grandson. One of the books was Anderson's memoirs containing the original pencil notes written by his grandfather. The notes (now referred to as the 'Swanson Marginalia') mention the name of Anderson's low-class Jew - 'Kosminski'. We shall learn more about Kosminski in a later chapter.

The Macnaghten Memoranda give details of three suspects whom the police had strong suspicions against. They were Mr M J Druitt, a doctor (in fact he was a lawyer); Kosminski, a Polish Jew who lived in the heart of the district; and Michael Ostrog, a Russian doctor and a convict who ended up in a lunatic asylum. Macnaghten wrote that Druitt was sexually insane and that 'private info' indicated that his own family believed him to have been the murderer. We do not know what the content of his private information was or from whom it was received.

Major Henry Smith wrote in his memoirs *From Constable to Commissioner* (1910) that there was no man living who knew as much about the murders

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as he did. The *True Crime* writer Hargrave Lee Adam (who died in 1946) wrote in his preface to the book *The Trial of George Chapman*, that Major Smith had told him the Ripper's identity was definitely known. If this was the case there must have been important reasons for keeping it secret.

It seems obvious to me that the senior officers involved in the hunt for the Ripper had their own ideas about his identity and it is this void, this space where the Ripper's name ought to have been, that has given rise to the many 'solutions' to the puzzle. The problem of Jack the Ripper's identity is indeterminable probably because, in truth, there was nobody who could be absolutely certain that their preferred suspect was the man they had so diligently searched for. The unforgettable trade name has perpetuated the mystery; but above all, the one thing about this Victorian murderer is the fact that he took tremendous risks, and if we can use the word 'luck' in relation to this series of gruesome crimes, then lucky he certainly was.

2

Black Bags and Top Hats

In glancing through a few of my books on Jack the Ripper, I noticed that the front covers of some of the more recent publications depict a top-hatted figure wearing a long, dark coat. This seems to be the standard image, the universal symbol of terror we now associate with the Ripper. The cover of the book, *Yours Truly from Hell*, written by Terrence Lore Smith for the centenary of the murders, shows a top-hatted silhouette with glowing eyes and a silver knife blade pointing upwards: the indestructible Ripper as a supernatural monster emerging from the fires of Hell. A 1966 version of the well-known novel, *The Lodger*, penned by Marie Belloc Lowndes, shows the eerie figure of a man with a top hat and clutching a brown bag as he walks down a misty street. He makes his first appearance on the doorstep of a house in Marylebone Road:

On the top of the three steps which led up to the door, there stood the long, lanky figure of a man, clad in an Inverness cape and an old-fashioned top hat.

The top hat has become as much a part of Ripper mythology as the thick fogs of the alleyways of Whitechapel. Indeed, the most recurring theme in Ripper movies is the foggy street with an occasional hansom cab rattling by, a lone streetwalker ambling along and a bloodthirsty fiend hiding in the shadows wearing his hat and cape and holding his customary black bag. These are the main ingredients for yet another '*orrible murder!*

It has been written that Jack the Ripper initiated the age of the 'sex crime'. When we analyse his crimes and decipher the true meaning behind them it is easy to see why the Victorians found them to be incomprehensible. Successive crimes have been compared to the grisly murders belonging to that small time-frame in London's East End. In the 1980s and '90s the terms 'lust murder' and 'serial killer' began to emerge. What is frustrating for police forces around the world is the fact that serial killers strike at random; their victims are not known to them and consequently they are very difficult

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to track down. Sex crimes are more prevalent today than they were, say, sixty years ago. The term 'sex murder' is not easy to define and is not a term that you can look up in a book to see what it means. You might think that such a murder involves a sex act followed by the act of murder itself, but that is not always the case. Broadly speaking, serial killers are usually sexually motivated: they harbour distorted sexual emotions. In sex crimes there is not only a fusion of sex and violence, but a *confusion* between the two. This is usually acquired at an early age. The sexual psychopath then is able to attain sexual satisfaction from the violence of a murder. Jack the Ripper's 'sexual feelings' played an important part in his homicidal rampages.

The hidden and bizarre fantasies of a serial killer were simply not known about in the 1880s. It is only over the last twenty years or so that psychiatrists and criminologists have managed to gain some understanding of the motivation within these murderers. For the people of Whitechapel and Spitalfields this type of new crime instilled fear and anxiety. There was nothing available in those days which could provide answers to the questions surrounding those seemingly motiveless crimes, and even if there had been, crime detection was only in its infancy anyway. There were no sophisticated techniques like the ones we have today. A simple, rational explanation would have been enough to at least appease the emotions of the general public who lived in the area where these sex crimes occurred.

The idea that the murderer may have been a doctor, or at least someone with anatomical or medical knowledge, came about after the inquest into Annie Chapman's death. In his summing up on 26 September, 1888, Coroner Wynne Baxter said, 'The body has not been dissected, but the injuries have been made by someone who had considerable anatomical skill and knowledge. There are no meaningless cuts.' On the final day of the inquest the Coroner said that the murderer may not have been a lunatic. He then told the court that he had received information from the sub-curator of the Pathological Museum regarding an American who had asked the sub-curator to procure a number of specimens of the organ that was missing from the deceased. The American was willing to pay twenty pounds for each specimen, which he needed to use in conjunction with a publication he was working on.

Here we have a theory to explain why the murders might have been committed. It could have been a mad doctor who needed the organs for research purposes, or even somebody who was prepared to take enormous risks in the murder of prostitutes, so as to obtain the required organ in order

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to sell it. One can well imagine people from that era being persuaded to believe in such a scenario. It was a theme readily taken up by the newspapers of the day who were quick off the mark when they referred to Wynne Baxter's conclusions as a 'Burke and Hare' theory. Was there any truth in the theory? Apparently there was. The *British Medical Journal* ran an article to say that enquiries had been made at a medical school in the previous year. A foreign physician had been asking for certain body parts, but no sum of money had been offered.

So, even at this fairly early stage in the Whitechapel crime series, we have this idea coming through that a physician may somehow be implicated. These early seeds were to flower and blossom into the insane, 'mad doctor' theories which were to emerge in later years. In 1888 the gossip of the newspapers would have fuelled public imagination and the image of the Ripper as a doctor would begin to form, embellished by the addition of the little black bag. In those days black bags were commonplace items. Doctors carried them around and so did other citizens too.

Mrs Fanny Mortimer, a woman in her forties who lived at 36 Berner Street, was standing at her front door on the night that Liz Stride was murdered. Her house was only a few doors away from Dutfield's Yard, and she was at her front door at some time between 12.30 and 1 a.m. 30 September. Her original statement appeared in the *Daily News* and says that she saw a young man passing down the street who was carrying a black shiny bag. He came down the street from Commercial Road and Mrs Mortimer had seen nobody exit the yard before 1 a.m.

Ex-Chief Inspector Walter Dew wrote about this incident in his memoirs. Louis Diemschutz's name is incorrectly written, but this is understandable when one considers that Dew was writing his book fifty years later. This is what Walter Dew wrote:

This woman was a Mrs Mortimer. After the main meeting at the clubhouse had broken up, some thirty or forty members who formed the choir remained behind to sing. Mrs Mortimer, as she had done on many previous occasions, came out to her gate the better to hear them. For ten minutes she remained there, seeing and hearing nothing which made her at all suspicious. Just as she was about to re-enter her cottage the woman heard the approach of a pony and cart. She knew this would be Lewis Dienschitz, the steward of the club. He went every Saturday to the market, returning about this hour of the early morning.

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At the same moment Mrs Mortimer observed something else, silent and sinister. A man, whom she judged to be about thirty, dressed in black, and carrying a small, shiny black bag, hurried furtively along the opposite side of the court. The woman was a little startled. The man's movements had been so quiet that she had not seen him until he was abreast of her. His head was turned away, as though he did not wish to be seen. A second later he had vanished round the corner leading to Commercial Road.

In fact the man carrying the black bag was Leon Goldstein, who went to the police the day after the Stride murder in order to vindicate himself. His bag contained nothing more than empty cigarette cases. His appearance at the police station was not widely publicised. On reading the extract from Walter Dew's memoirs, the man seen carrying the small black bag appears a suspicious character, and in all probability this story became inextricably linked to the murderer. Dew's writings are extremely interesting as they are based on his own knowledge from the days when it all happened. People were letting their imaginations run riot, conjuring up all kinds of fears about black magic and vampires. One of the strongest rumours at the time was that the culprit was a medical student or a doctor, but Dew's thoughts on the matter were clear. The mutilations carried out on the women were more likely to have been made by a maniac rather than a person who had a knowledge of surgery.

Would a doctor have been suspected of being the murderer simply because he was in the appropriate area carrying his black bag? The London Hospital was situated not far from the first murder scene at Buck's Row, and it would be interesting here to see what Dr Dennis Gratwick Halstead had to say about the murders. Dr Halstead was born in 1865 and began his medical career at the London Hospital in 1884. He was the author of *Doctor in the Nineties* (1959), which features an entire chapter on the Ripper murders and it makes fascinating reading. He wrote that the East End was a frightening place and the unknown killer became known as 'the terror of Whitechapel'. Few women dared to venture out alone after dark. The good doctor's work must have been trying at the best of times, particularly when one considers the types of patients that came his way. Sailors and dockhands of all nationalities used to frequent the brothels and opium dens situated in the dockland area and invariably the 'backwash of this seething tide of humanity' would end up in the receiving room at the hospital. There were drunkards in the last stages of alcoholism who thought nothing of assaulting

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the duty nurses, and prostitutes used to turn up covered in blood from their fights with gin bottles.

Halstead's opening paragraph on the murders tells us about the frantic efforts and house-to-house searches made by the police and the cross-questioning of hundreds of suspects. The mystery remained unsolved. Dr Halstead wrote that the murderer possessed anatomical knowledge and it was this belief that brought suspicion upon the medical profession itself, particularly the suspicions of the local police and plain-clothes detectives who were waiting in the back alleys ready to pounce. He makes an interesting point, though, in mentioning that the plain-clothes police were easy to spot and that it would not have been difficult for the Ripper to keep out of their way. If his writings were based totally on memory then he certainly deserved credit. Many inhabitants of Whitechapel looked capable of committing some sort of crime and the police thought they were making progress when they were looking for a man called 'Leather Apron'. It transpired that he was an unfortunate Polish Jew, Halstead wrote, and he was merely a boot-finisher by trade. He was released after questioning as was the case with many others. It was suggested that a butcher might have been responsible, his expertise having been gained through his butchering techniques. Slaughtermen too came under suspicion, but all clues and suspicions that were acted on came to a blank. Interestingly, the doctor wrote that it was a 'section of medical opinion' who dismissed the butcher or slaughterer theory in favour of the idea that the killer could have escaped detection and remained unknown amongst the criminal element because he was a member of the upper classes. The acute Dr Halstead pointed out how articles in *Punch* drew attention to the advertisement of murder mysteries on the stage and how they had an evil and corrupting influence on the people who were confronted with them - possibly even the murderer himself.

In the days following the inquest of Annie Chapman the medical staff at the London Hospital fell under suspicion and were often followed when walking through the neighbourhood. It seems that the locals avoided members of the medical profession. This fixation with black bags, doctors and surgeons, obviously gave rise to other theories that the killer may have been from the upper classes. The image that we have now of Jack the Ripper, wearing a top hat and carrying his black bag, is far removed from the reality of those murders in the autumn of 1888. The public and the press had their own ideas regarding the nature of the Ripper, and the possibility of a 'gentleman' murderer has given rise to many books and films which, even now, still hang on to this concept. In connection with the slaying of Mary

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Kelly, Dr Halstead wrote:

A great crowd immediately gathered outside Miller's Court, and there was consternation as the gory details became fully known. Once again the cry went up that the police and their blessed bloodhounds were on the wrong scent, but this time those who knew the woman Kelly were sure that they had recently seen her in the company of a sinister and handsome-looking stranger with a moustache, who carried a black bag around with him, and had been seen accosting four different women on the same evening on a previous occasion.

Dr Haslthead's chapter on the Whitechapel crimes is very interesting and well worth reading if you get the chance.

Daniel Farson was, amongst other things, a journalist and television presenter. He carried out his own research into the murders and his book, *Jack the Ripper*, was published in 1972. He managed to contact Mary Cox's niece, whose recollection of her aunt's story is illustrative. The information passed onto Mr Farson was that Mary Cox saw Kelly coming through the 'iron gate' with a gentleman who was a real toff. He was fine looking and wore an overcoat, cape and a high hat. He was carrying a Gladstone bag.

This seems to have been the impression of the murderer which caught the imagination of the public at the time: a gentleman, smart in appearance, dark moustache, hat, long dark coat and carrying small black bag. Of course this theme had its variations. In 1997 I managed to obtain a reprint of the book *Jack the Ripper or When London Walked in Terror*. It had been published sixty years earlier and was written by ex-Detective Sergeant Edwin T Woodhall. His introduction tells us that he was a detective turned author, and his book recounts some of the theories and stories which were put forward at the time of the murders. His recollections are interesting because there are parallels with the contents of his work and theories which were to appear in print decades later. Writing about the murder of Polly Nichols, he tells us some details about Constable Thain's beat. Thain caught sight of a tall man who, having been surprised at the approach of the policeman, crossed to the other side of the road:

From the swift glimpse the constable caught some distance away, by the dimly lit rays of a street gas lamp, he appeared

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very white-faced with dark eyes and moustache. His age was hard to state, but judging by his build and the swift energetic way he moved – not an old man. However, the constable, used to the people's dress in this locality, did observe that the style and cut of the clothes seemed superior, and that he wore a rather big fashionable tweed cloth cap pulled well down over his eyes...

The key word in this paragraph is 'superior'. The constable did not get the chance to question the tall man as his attention was drawn to a man and his wife who were arguing in a nearby alley. 'Leather Apron' makes an appearance a little further on in the narrative. He is described as a 'big burly Russian Jew of an ignorant type'. As a suspect he was ruled out but another man was arrested not far from the crime scene (i.e. of Annie Chapman's murder). This man, we are told, had blood on his clothes and hands, but it turned out that he was a butcher who was employed at a nearby slaughterhouse. This raises a fairly important point and it is that slaughterers could walk about the streets with blood on their clothing without causing alarm to passers-by. This situation may well have facilitated the Ripper's movements on the nights of his murders. Woodhall himself believed that the murders were committed by someone who had medical training. Unfortunately, the book contains many errors and the author's recollections had obviously become confused. A dark-eyed stranger is briefly described in relation to the Mitre Square murder. The contradictory statement runs thus:

The man seemed to have the peek of a cap pulled well down over his eyes, but the tailor noticed he was pale and had dark eyes and a moustache.

Anybody reading this book fifty years ago would have had no doubts at all concerning the killer's medical expertise. Regarding Mary Kelly's mutilations, he states, 'Every operation from a surgical point of view was found to be perfect.'

In Chapter Twelve of Woodhall's book we are introduced to the theory of the clairvoyant who helped the police in their investigations. The clairvoyant was Robert James Lees, and his alleged psychic identification of the Ripper has been the precursor to many theories concerning royalty and high-class gentlemen. This is the stuff of legend, and of all the solutions to

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the Ripper mystery, the royal conspiracy theories seem to have had the biggest impact. Edwin Woodhall claims the murderer was in fact tracked down by the use of clairvoyance and that the authorities knew who he was. In making his claim the author stated that he had the support of one of Britain's most powerful newspapers. In fact, the original story about Lees appeared in the Chicago *Sunday Times-Herald* in April 1895. It is a significant article in that it has spawned many erroneous ideas regarding the Ripper case.

The Lees story was apparently told by Dr Howard, who was a London physician, to William Greer Harrison of the Bohemian Club in San Francisco. Dr Howard sat in a court of enquiry concerning a brother physician who was proved to have been none other than Jack the Ripper. The supposed murderer was living in the West End of London and was a physician of high standing. Howard was sworn to secrecy but, under the influence of drink, he gave details of the story to a London clubman who was in Chicago at the time. Howard did not reveal the name of the murderer, but when the Ripper was eventually tracked down it was discovered he was a physician in good standing and with an extensive practice. He had been a student at Guy's Hospital and was an enthusiastic vivisectionist. The article stated that this man 'experienced the keenest delight in inflicting tortures upon defenceless animals' and only after a month of his marriage his wife discovered him holding a cat over the flame of a lamp, which he continued doing throughout the night until it died. The next day he was as lovable as ever. The article gave credit to Robert James Lees, the man who tracked down the Whitechapel fiend.

Lees was born in 1849 and his psychic powers became apparent when he was thirteen. In 1888 he lived in Peckham and was known for being a philanthropist and the author of several books on spiritualism. He gave private consultations as a medium and it was alleged that the late Prince Consort 'spoke' to people via Lees at a séance. It has been written that he became Queen Victoria's medium but the *Jack the Ripper A to Z* points out that biographers have failed to find any connection between the two.

Going back to the story of Lees and the Ripper, from the *Sunday Times-Herald*, we see that the clairvoyant was at the height of his powers during the first three murders. One day, whilst writing in his study, he had a feeling that another murder was about to be committed, and as hard as he tried he could not shake the feeling off. In his mind's eye he saw a man and a woman enter a narrow court.

Lees went to Scotland Yard with his story but they regarded him as a bit of a lunatic. However, the duty sergeant did take note of where the crime

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would be committed and the time when the couple entered the court. The following night a woman was seen with a man entering the court in question. The person who saw the couple thought the man was American because of the soft felt hat he had on. He looked like a gentleman. The body of a woman was discovered in the very spot which had been described by Mr Lees. Her throat had been cut from ear to ear and she had been horribly mutilated. Lees was shocked when he learned of the murder, and at the advice of a physician he took his family to the Continent. Whilst resting abroad he was free from his strange hallucinations.

During his absence there were four more murders and Lees decided to return to London. One day Lees and his wife were on an omnibus travelling down Edgware Road. A man had previously entered the vehicle and was wearing a dark suit of Scotch tweed over which was a light overcoat. The clairvoyant told his wife that the man was the Ripper, but she thought he was being foolish. The man got out at Oxford Street and was followed by Lees, who informed a police constable that his quarry was Jack the Ripper. Needless to say, the constable did not make an arrest. That very same night Lees had another vision in which he could clearly see the victim's face. He noticed that one of the ears had been cut off and the other one was attached only by a piece of skin. When the trance was over he rushed off to Scotland Yard and told an inspector what he had experienced. The officer was more inclined to take the story seriously after he learned about the severed ears. He took a postcard from his desk and showed it to Lees. The card was signed 'Jack the Ripper' and mentioned the ninth victim, whose ears were to be cut off. The inspector ordered 3,000 constables to wear plain clothes and these men, along with 1,500 detectives disguised as labourers, kept watch over the courts and alleys of Whitechapel. Still, the murderer came and went unchallenged, leaving behind his mutilated victim with the severed ears. Robert Lees was so upset by the atrocity that he left Britain and headed for the Continent again. Meanwhile, the Ripper continued his onslaught and reached a total of sixteen murders. After his return to England the clairvoyant had yet another vision but this time he decided to help the police in catching the murderer by using his 'magnetic influence'. One night the inspector and his aids followed closely behind Lees, who scoured the London streets on the scent of the elusive criminal. At 4 a.m. Lees halted at the gates of a West End mansion and pointed to an upper room, the window of which was illuminated by a faint light. The inspector looked at the mansion in disbelief as it was the residence of a celebrated physician. He told Lees that he would arrest the man, at the risk of jeopardising his own position, if he could describe the interior of the hall.

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They waited until 7 a.m. and then entered the house. Lees' description of the interior hall was correct, apart from some minor details, and so they waited while one of the servants went to summon the doctor's wife. Upon questioning, the wife revealed that her husband had been absent from home on the nights of the murders and she did not believe that he was of sound mind. A thorough search of the house revealed a Scotch tweed suit, soft felt hat and a light overcoat. The physician was convinced of his guilt and asked to be killed at once. He was taken to a private insane asylum in Islington and a sham death and burial were undertaken to account for his disappearance. An empty coffin lies in the family vaults at Kensal Green. To the keepers at the asylum the illustrious patient is known as 'Thomas Mason'.

This account is more or less the gist of what appeared in the *Sunday Times-Herald*. The story itself originated in a club founded by Chicago journalists who delighted in creating tall stories. The 'Whitechapel Club' was the name given to this establishment. William Greer Harrison was a broker from San Francisco who felt the need to mingle with poets and writers but was thought of as being pretentious. What is certain is that Robert Lees did go to the police to offer his services in the hunt for the killer but he was regarded as being a fool and a madman. The Chicago newspaper story impressed at least one journalist in Britain who wrote his own piece for the *People* newspaper. The article appeared in the edition for 19 May 1895, and named Dr Benjamin Howard as being responsible for telling the story. Howard was out of the country when the story appeared, but on his return in January 1896, he wrote a furious letter to the editor of the *People*, in which he stated that there was nothing in the article concerning him which had the slightest foundation in fact.

Edwin Woodhall repeats the Chicago story in his 1937 book and towards the end of Chapter Twelve he wrote:

Lengthy questioning of the doctor's wife brought to light the most amazing Jekyll and Hyde story ever heard. The man was one of London's most distinguished doctors - but he had a dual personality.

Woodhall's information was taken from a 1931 edition of the *London Daily Express*, and although the information had been lifted from the *Times-Herald*, it featured a small piece that was to further compound this fairy tale. The information, it said, had come from a secret document written by Lees which had been given to a friend and was to be released after Lees had died. His death occurred in January 1931 and the reappearance of the story was

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due to the curiosity of a crime reporter named Cyril Morton. Undoubtedly, Mr Morton was under the impression that Lees knew the identity of the Ripper. He had visited the daughter of Robert Lees but no information was forthcoming regarding her late father's involvement with the Ripper affair. Whilst at her home, Morton noticed a copy of the original 1895 story and shortly after his visit he managed to secure a copy for his own purposes. Morton's write-up for the *Daily Express* was basically the same as the 1895 original but there was no reference to its American sources. What made the rehash of this tale perhaps a little more persuasive was the addition of the 'secret document'. Thus the affair of the clairvoyant and Jack the Ripper swings into action in the 1930s with a newspaper article and a book written by an ex-detective sergeant. Robert Lees surfaced again in 1970 when Cynthia Legh wrote an article for *Light*, the Journal of the College of Psychic Studies. She first met Lees in 1912, after which he became a frequent visitor at her home in Cheshire. Her report says that the Queen had sent for him on several occasions and that she valued his exceptional gifts. Various spirit guides helped Lees with his writings, and on one occasion the guide spoke to him after a murder had been committed in Whitechapel and told him to go to the Queen, which he did. The Queen herself gave Robert James Lees enough authority to enable him to help the police with their enquiries. The incident about Lees taking the police to a doctor's house in London is again mentioned, also the fact that the Queen asked Lees and his family to leave London for five years in order to quell any rumours which may have reached the doctor's wife. The clairvoyant received a pension while he was away from London.

Here we can see how the royal connection is brought back to the boil. After Cynthia Legh's story was printed another theory appeared - this time in *The Criminologist* for November, 1970. The piece was entitled 'Jack the Ripper - A Solution', and was written by T E A Stowell, CBE, MD. The suspect's name was not mentioned; he was referred to simply as 'S', who was an heir to power and wealth. In August 1960, writer and crime historian Colin Wilson had a series of essays published in the London *Evening Standard* about the Ripper murders. Wilson used the details of the murders as a background for his first novel *Ritual in the Dark* (1960).

One of the readers of the *Evening Standard* was Dr Thomas Stowell. He was intrigued by Wilson's writings on the murders and so he wrote to the author saying that Wilson knew more about the murders than he was willing to admit. The two met at the Athenaeum and during the course of their meal Stowell got to the point of their meeting. In one of his articles Colin Wilson wrote that a man had been observed close to the scene of one

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of the Ripper murders and he had been described as looking like a 'gentleman'. Wilson pointed out that the description was merely an account given by a witness at the time of the atrocities. It was that fact alone which Stowell found interesting, and he went on to say that his instincts had been confirmed. He added that the Ripper was the Duke of Clarence. His 1970 article had given enough detail for one to be able to deduce that 'S' was Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, son of the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII). Stowell thought the Prince was suffering from syphilis and was being treated by Sir William Gull, Physician in Ordinary to Queen Victoria. As we have seen, there was speculation at the time of the murders that medical skill was shown in the removal of various organs. It is not difficult to see how Sir William Gull was to be implicated in the Ripper saga by theorists and myth makers. Sir William Gull was supposedly seen in Whitechapel on the night of a Ripper murder, and Stowell surmised that the purpose of his presence was to certify the murderer as being insane, so as to be kept under restraint. Dr Stowell received much attention after the publication of his article, so much so that he was invited to appear on BBC television for an interview with Kenneth Allsop. Stowell decided to go along with it but during the interview he declined to name his suspect. Six days later he wrote to *The Times* denying that 'S' was the Duke of Clarence. Before the letter appeared in the newspaper Dr Stowell died and his papers relating to the theory were destroyed by his family.

The medical theme, which has evolved as a way of partly explaining the murders, has been fairly prominent in books and films about the Whitechapel murders. This, coupled with theories involving gentlemen and doctors and even certain members of the royal family, has given us an everlasting impression of a top-hatted figure kitted out with his obligatory black bag and long, dark coat, stalking his victims through the fog-laden back alleys of London's East End. It's almost like a drama that would have been acted out in the theatres; almost like a Jekyll and Hyde production. Almost, but not quite, pure fiction.

Australian-born Leonard Matters wrote a full-length book on the Ripper mystery. It was published in 1929 and the author asks the question, 'Was the murderer a surgeon?' To which he answers, 'Almost positively, yes'. It would have been impossible for a man who was ignorant of physiology and anatomy to have carried out mutilations which were so precise and consistent. I was fortunate enough to obtain a copy of Matters' book, *The Mystery of Jack the Ripper*, in 1982, after I had written to a book-finding service listing my requirements. If I remember rightly, the book cost me £12. The author had spent some years in Buenos Aires as a newspaper editor,

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and in the introduction to his book he says that he came upon a confession which could, if true, dissipate much of the mystery surrounding Jack the Ripper.

Over half way through the book we are introduced to the report of the man with the black bag. They were commonly seen in the big cities during that time period, but as Matters points out, they went out of fashion at the time of the Whitechapel murders due to their connection with the murderer. Anyone seen carrying such a bag, by day or by night, would be set upon by angry crowds. A certain person entered the King Street Police Station and told the desk sergeant that he had lost his black bag. Not only did he speak about the murders, so we are told, he also offered to cut off the sergeant's head. He was placed in a cell and a police doctor declared that he was a homicidal lunatic. Apparently, he was believed to have been the person who was seen talking to Catharine Eddowes shortly before she was killed. He admitted that he had studied to be a medical man but became an engineer instead. He ended up in a lunatic asylum. We learn about the real 'Jack' in Matter's chapter on 'The Satanic Dr Stanley'. This man was a brilliant surgeon; he had connections with Harley Street professionals and was talked about and admired by students of the various London hospitals. He had been married, but his wife died when their son was only a few years old. From that time onwards Stanley retired from public life wishing to be left alone. He believed his son would follow in his footsteps and become one of the world's greatest surgeons. Dr Stanley told one of his colleagues that the lad would be famous and 'he will be hailed as a saviour of humanity.' All the doctor's hopes were hinged on the success of his son, but at the beginning of 1888 the son, a young man by then, died.

The author wrote that the only fictitious aspect of the Dr Stanley story was his name. He admitted that he could not find any proof to substantiate his claims and his search of the records of the General Medical Council of Great Britain failed to reveal the existence of a Dr Stanley in 1888. He goes on:

The story of Dr Stanley so far as I have related it, is definitely based on the recital of an anonymous surgeon in Buenos Aires who claimed to have been a student in London under the doctor, and to have been present when he died in the Argentine capital ten years or more ago.

Let's continue with the story. The son's name was Herbert Stanley and in 1886 he met a young girl in a café. Her name was Marie Jeanette. Stanley was drunk as he and his university chums were celebrating their Boat Race

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victory. Marie was one of the best-looking girls he had ever seen. They went out together for a short while and then went to Paris for a week. This signalled the end. Herbert left Marie forever when he discovered that she had a disease. When his fellow students found out, Herbert was kicked out of college. Dr Stanley was determined to help his son and to this end he engaged the help of the best medical men in the world. They fought for months to save the son's life. The son died, but not before he had divulged the name of the girl who had ultimately been the cause of his death – Marie Jeanette Kelly. Dr Stanley stood beside the body of his son and said, 'I will find the woman. When I find her, I will kill her; by God, I will!'

Eventually, he did. Leaving his home one night in Portman Square he made his way to Wardour Street where Kelly was living in lodgings. The girl had moved out, but the present occupant told Stanley that Marie had gone to live in the East End. The task to find her proved difficult, especially in Whitechapel and Spitalfields, where thousands of streetwalkers lived. So, Stanley questions the unfortunates regarding Kelly's whereabouts. To cover his tracks he murders them using his long dagger and his surgical knife. His search brings him into contact with Martha Tabram, Polly Nichols and the rest. Catharine Eddowes gives her name as Kate Kelly, but she cannot have been an acquaintance of his son because she is old and ugly. All is not lost; she knew a 'Mary Kelly' who lived in Dorset Street. Needless to say, the satanic Dr Stanley finds Mary Kelly and satisfies his revengeful feelings. The task is done, and to quote from the *Matters* book, 'And when next day they found the body of the woman, cut to pieces as he had sworn, her heart was on the pillow by her head!'

Ten years later Dr Stanley ends up in a hospital – the 'X' Hospital in Buenos Aires where he dies of cancer. Before he dies Dr Stanley summons one of his students from the early days who is now a doctor himself. The doctor arrives and duly hears Stanley's confession that he is Jack the Ripper. Soon after – Stanley is dead.

We must ask ourselves: Have these stories of doctors and gentlemen with their black bags and top hats really influenced our way of thinking about that particular criminal from the autumn of 1888? This question was the basis of a theme for a television programme which was shown on BBC 2 in September 1988. It was a documentary for a series called *Timewatch* and this particular episode, shown on the centenary of the murders, was called *Shadow of the Ripper*. It was written and presented by Sir Christopher Frayling, Rector of London's Royal College of Art, where he is also Professor of Cultural History. He has written many books and articles on aspects of cultural history and has studied the origins of famous novels like *Dracula*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. His television

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contribution to the Ripper mystery is an important comment on how the murders were transformed into a Victorian melodrama by plays, books and films, and also how the newspapers of the time altered the public's conception of the murderer. Sir Christopher Frayling tells us that the real story of Jack the Ripper is not a 'whodunnit', but a story of newspaper men and the kind of person we think the killer must have been. He rightly points out that the West End newspapers had turned the gruesome murders in Whitechapel and the surrounding areas into a major media event.

William Thomas Stead was the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and apart from experimenting with a more conspicuous style of newspaper format, known as the 'New Journalism', he used the Whitechapel murders as part of a campaign against the Metropolitan Police and particularly Sir Charles Warren. The Met were already a target for the radical press on account of, amongst other things, the heavy-handed tactics that were used to restrain 20,000 demonstrators who attempted to enter Trafalgar Square on 13 November 1887. One person was killed and hundreds were injured during the clashes between the police, who had a back-up of Grenadier Guards, and the demonstrators. The incident was later referred to as 'Bloody Sunday'. The W T Stead-versus-Warren saga became a 'larger than life variety turn', as Frayling puts it, and the stories soon found their places in the Victorian penny dreadful magazines like *The Illustrated Police News*, with their lurid drawings. What was to emerge from this growing amount of press coverage was the idea of the Ripper being a 'gentleman' or 'decadent aristocrat'. This came about when W T Stead quoted the Marquis de Sade with reference to what the murderer might be like as a person.

The idea of Jack the Ripper as a gentleman may also have arisen from the issues surrounding prostitution and in particular in relation to Stead's newspaper article about the abuse of children for the sexual gratification of upper-class gentlemen. Music halls and theatres, although places for fun and entertainment, may have provided 'entertainment' of a different kind. Some people thought they were brothels dressed up to look seemingly innocent. In the upper rooms of such places gentlemen took their women for sexual favours. Stead attacked these places; he wanted them to get rid of the 'sex' that was being projected by the dancers on stage, and he also attacked the West End toffs who indulged themselves in the bawdy atmosphere of cigars, wine and easy women.

From these types of settings emerged the myth of 'Jack' as a gentleman or as a Prince. From the campaigns against immorality within the higher classes came the belief that the murderer must have been a West End toff or a decadent aristocrat, a sort of Jekyll and Hyde character who lived in the West End by day, the East End by night. So, the Ripper was the Duke of

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Clarence and Avondale, or Montague Druitt who was a barrister and member of the MCC. W T Stead and his followers were partly successful in their campaigns, because Wilton's music hall was transformed into a mission in 1888 and, as Frayling tells us, it was this very attention to the music halls and to vice in high places that moulded the image of Jack the Ripper for all time.

As previously mentioned, various details relating to the death of Annie Chapman gave rise to the belief that the murderer may have possessed medical knowledge or skill. The imagery of the sadistic and cruel doctor was available at that time in novels and anti-vivisectionist literature.

Women were taken into hospital theatres and underwent major surgery in front of an audience of medical students, and the allegations were saying that the operations were unnecessary and merely an aid to the students' education. The liberal press latched on to this notion of needless cruelty in theatres, and so 'Gentleman Jack' became 'Dr Jack'.

The more conservative opinions of the press like *Punch* drew readers' attention away from the sensational Ripper stories and, as well as pointing out the need for more policemen on the beat, it attacked the liberal press for obstructing the police authorities in their investigations. The East End was described as an abyss, full of strange inhabitants from other cultures and teaming with Jews from Eastern Europe. Out of the long, tedious years of unemployment there came a new breed of people who were becoming more politically outspoken. Socialists, anarchists and militants were apparent in the late 1880s and their views were expressed in various 'alternative' newspapers. The need for social reform brought General Booth and the Salvationists to the East End, along with all sorts of charity organisations. One newspaper jokingly suggested that the murderer might be a mad social reformer who had designs on calling attention to the plight of the people. Others gave credence to the theory that the Ripper could have been a slum dweller or a Jew, and so anybody who didn't fit in became a target for the vigilantes.

In summing up, Sir Christopher Frayling says that in our attempts to unmask the identity of the murderer we are fulfilling a desire to show that the Ripper belongs to a set of people we mistrust; whether this comes from cinema or comics or music halls, he represents a space into which we put all the people we don't like – and we call them 'Jack the Ripper'.

This well-balanced and informative documentary also features crime historian, writer and broadcaster Martin Fido, who explains the details of the murders to a group of pilgrims.